

Interview with Ziya Polat conducted at the Princeton Recycles Site on Basin Street in Princeton, New Jersey on 12/10/15

Contact info:

Currently living at

EPA OSC David Rosoff interviewed Ziya Polat regarding the Princeton Recycles Site in Princeton, New Jersey. Generally Mr. Polat was of sound mind, however he is a potent conspiracy theorist and extremely skeptical of Government. Mr. Polat required that I wrap my phone in tinfoil and that we only talk outside. He carried a copy of the U.S. Constitution with him and he claimed to be a disciple of Alex Jones, America's leading conspiracy theorist. Despite this Mr. Polat was willing to talk to me because he feels he has been misunderstood and that he has a story to tell. Overall we were able to get some information about the site but a lot of details were lacking. The conversation we had lasted about 2 hours. Much of that time was Mr. Polat expressing his views on corruption in government. He recommended that I rebel against my current position and "do the right thing". He stressed that a revolution was needed and coming.

The following Site-related questions were asked with the answers provided:

When did Mr. Polat operate at the Site and what was the name and nature of the business.

Mr. Polat said he began leasing the property for the recycling business (lots 2 and 8) in 1997. He paid rent to Nello Rossi to operate the business until 2003 when he was evicted. He changed the name of the business from Princeton Waste (Nello Rossi's business name) to Princeton Recycles. Mr. Polat said the Princeton Recycles business was exclusively metals recycling. Metal was brought to the Site by truck mostly by individuals. Sometimes Mr. Polat would use his truck to pick up metal and bring it back to the Site. Mr. Polat said he dealt in iron, copper wire (including lead shielded wire), brass and copper plumbing, roofing sheet metal and tin and aluminum products. He stored much of this scrap on Lot 8. The more valuable metals were stored in large cardboard boxes inside the metal shed on the back of Lot 2. Mr. Polat said he never accepted transformers on the Site and did not deal in them. He did say he dealt with a lot of wire but he did not burn it. Instead he stripped it manually and segregated the lead and copper for recycling or he resold the wire directly with no processing. Most metal materials were brought to the yard by individuals and Mr. Polat would purchase the scrap in cash only transactions. Mr. Polat said there would be no records of these transactions. He also purchased scrap metal from Princeton University and Bergenzer Brothers. Wire and metal from his larger customers were bought by check. Mr. Polat said he may still have some limited amount of business records. Scrap metal, copper and lead were sold to large scrapyards in Camden, Trenton and Philadelphia but he could not remember the names of the businesses or the people he dealt with. Mr. Polat stated that he never operated at any other locations and that he worked alone and did not have a partner.

What was the nature of site operations?

Scrap metal was brought in by truck and handled on site by heavy equipment (backhoe and excavator). There were 2 scales on the site – one truck scale and one platform scale. Lot 8 was used to store the

metal scrap. According to Mr. Polat very limited processing occurred on the Site. Metals were segregated and broken down by type and value for sale.

What did Mr. Polat know about the origin of the contamination on the Site.

Mr. Polat explained that he was told by Nello Rossi that Princeton Waste had taken in vast quantities of transformers, mostly from AT&T between the 1960s and 1980s. Polat said that Rossi told him that they dumped the transformer oil all over the property to control dust and vegetation. He also said that once they found out the oil contained PCBs (i.e. "was bad") they tried to get rid of it by dumping clandestinely around the neighborhood in people's yards and in the woods. When Mr. Polat began leasing the scrap yard he was told by Mr. Rossi not to touch 4 55-gallon drums filled with "bad oil" that were being stored on Site. Polat said these drums were leaking when it rained so he tried to cover them. Eventually, he said, Mr. Rossi had someone come in and remove them and Mr. Polat signed the paperwork. He could not remember the date.

What was Mr. Polat's history at the Site?

Mr. Polat said he came to the Site in 1997 to lease the scrapyard and eventually buy it from Mr. Rossi. In 2001 he bought 403 Basin Street and began living there. In 2003 he had a falling out with Mr. Rossi and Rossi evicted him from the property. This involved a court case in Princeton to which, he said, there are extensive court records. At one point during this case, which also involved the Town and the neighbors on Basin Street, Mr. Polat was put in jail by the Judge. Polat stated that he was given 3 months to clean up the Site and then vacate. During this time he was forced to sell all of his scrap at less than half price. Polat continued to live at 403 Basin Street even after the eviction until about 2005 when the Bank foreclosed on the property.

What could Mr. Polat tell us about Nello Rossi?

The following information provided by Mr. Polat is of interest:

- Rossi was supposed to sell Polat the business but backed out.
- Rossi admitted to Polat that he was responsible for contaminating the Site and Polat had asked that Rossi provide insurance in the transaction to address this.
- Rossi had several employees but Polat could not remember their names.
- Rossi became fully aware of PCBs in the transformer oil at some point yet continued to handle the oil improperly.
- Rossi had a high dollar "umbrella" insurance policy on the business.
- Polat only picked up a small percentage of Rossi's customers and had to "build up" the business on his own.
- Polat said he possesses videos and recordings he made of conversations he had with Nello Rossi. He did this because of the lawsuits and he kept them because he thought the issue of contamination could come up in the future. He claims these videos as well as testimony in the court case implicate Nello Rossi as the polluter. Mr. Polat stressed that EPA should review the court record.